

Boxing as a Staged Performance in Contemporary Art

Boxing is a major media event and visual spectacle, and as such it has also become an important subject of contemporary fine arts. As a key medium of creative expression, visual art not only provides a variety of different views of boxing but is also able to change how reality is perceived by deconstructing traditional viewing practices and defying social conventions. Through the analysis of selected contemporary artworks, this study challenges our unquestioning acceptance of media-based images of boxing and explores a number of related issues – for example, what does a classic boxing pose represent if it is removed from its context? Does the meaning of the pose remain the same, regardless of where it is presented, and by whom? How is boxing perceived if an artist puts his or her own body at risk, or stages a boxing match in an art gallery or museum setting? To what extent do such individual artistic approaches transform the sport's heroic myths and identification models into questionable concepts? Societal norms are thereby called into question, while boxing appears as an intensified form of expression in a world that oscillates between reality and staged performance.

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